

Project Love

A PODI Digital Print Case Study

Boden, a mail order clothing retailer based in the United Kingdom, also operates in the United States and Europe selling quality clothes for the whole family and believes in making its customers feel and look great. The company uses catalogs primarily to sell its clothing lines. The challenge the company faces with 52 million pieces of direct mail each year is constantly develop fresh ideas for creating an immediate emotional connection with the customer while demonstrating the company's core values and growing sales.

For the Winter 2010 catalog Boden created a highly personalized catalog in keeping with the commission of their Founder and Chairman, Johnnie Boden, to "bring back the love" to their customer communications. The company also wanted to integrate the campaign across every customer touchpoint, from e-mail and social media to the experience customers receive when they contact the call center.

Campaign Objectives

The campaign objectives were to:

- Achieve a minimum of 2% uplift in response rates,
- Increase Return-on-Investment, and
- Lead customers to a competition on Boden's Web site.

Results

The results yielded by the 250,000 personalized catalogs and 200,000 personalized e-mails were significantly better than those achieved by the generic catalog cover sent to other recipients.

Vertical Market:

Retail

Business Application:

Direct Marketing/Direct Order

The results included:

- A 30% uplift in response rates,
- A 12% higher click-through rate (personalized e-mails),
- A ROI of the whole campaign higher than the generic catalog,
- 3,000 competition entries, 250 posts to Boden's Facebook page, and more than 1,000 related comments, and
- Hundreds of customers submitted positive, unprompted feedback via the company call center.

Campaign Architecture

Boden selected a cross-section of 250,000 of its best, singular, and lapsed buyers for the campaign. The rest of the Winter 2010 catalog recipients received a generic, unpersonalized version based on the same theme.

All personalized catalogs featured the customer's first name and "I loves" motifs on the cover and spine. The cover also had a fold-out flap with a love story, which was completely unique to each customer based on their shopping history with Boden. The back cover of the catalog featured three product recommendations selected specifically for each recipient.

Personalized e-mails using the love story header and featuring additional personal product recommendations were also sent.

The catalog cover and e-mail directed recipients to a competition landing page on the Boden Web site where they could engage and contribute by sharing what they love and dislike about Boden.

Target Audience and Messaging

The overall target audience for Boden is mail order clothing buyers who are typically 34-55 year old females with a UK ABC1 demographic profile. The graphical design and content of the personalized love story on the inside cover flap was intended to be quirky, endearing, and engaging.

The messaging was customized for three customer segments:

- Best—buyers who have purchased from Boden more than once,
- Singular—new customers in the last year who made only one purchase, and
- Lapsed—buyers who had not purchased in more than a year.

Customized messaging targeted three customer segments: Best (buyers who had purchased from Boden more than once), Singular (those who had made only one purchase in the last year), and Lapsed (buyers who had not purchased in more than a year).

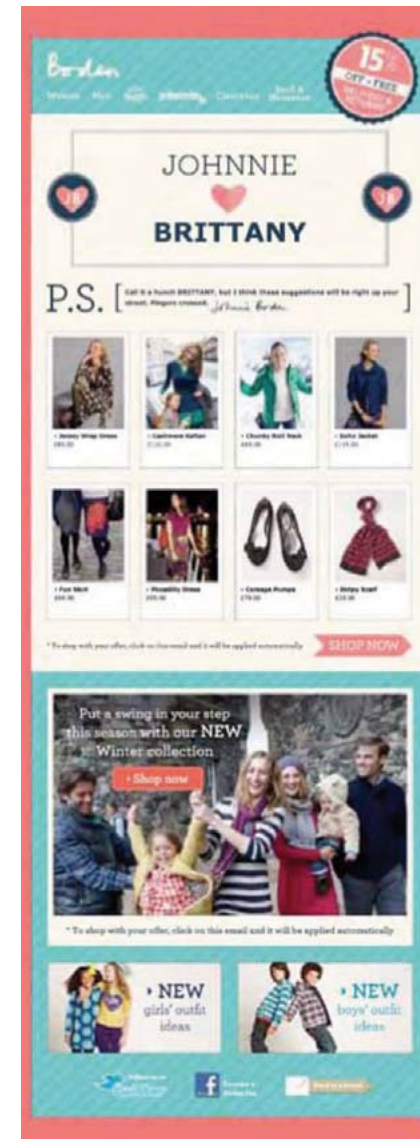


Each of the three variations of the love story between Johnnie and the recipient referenced when and how the recipient was added to the database, when and what the last purchase was, if any, and the current state of the relationship. The examples show how the copy was customized for each of the customer segments and personalized for each recipient:

- **Best**—"When they were finally introduced back in 2008 by Alison's postman, a profligate matchmaker, few would have guessed they would still be together now. When Alison played hard to get, Johnnie provoked her with pictures of other women wearing the clothes he had made for her. After increasingly pathetic and awkward entreaties, she relented and sealed the deal with a Printed New Lambswool Rollneck. They have an open relationship, flirting with others, but always coming back to each other in the end."
- **Singular**—"When they were finally introduced not long ago by Brittany's postman, a profligate matchmaker, few would have guessed things would move so quickly. At first Brittany played hard to get, but Johnnie soon wore her down with increasingly pathetic and awkward entreaties. Finally, after one glass of wine too many, she gave in and sealed the deal with a Holland Park Dress. They have been together less than a year, and who knows where this will end."
- **Lapsed**—"When they were finally introduced back in 2008 by Carole's matchmaker, few could have predicted the roller coaster relationship that would ensue. It was not long before they sealed the deal with a Cardigan. Then, Carole stopped calling. They had had an open relationship, and he had always hoped she would come back."

Offer

Boden offered two response incentives: first, all recipients were given a limited discount and free delivery. Second, three discount levels were offered according to the customer life cycle for each recipient.



E-mail with variable products.

At the end of the love story, the reader was invited to enter a competition based on the classic "I love him, I love him not" game: "Tell us what you love or loathe about the mail order lothario." The respondent could send the response by e-mail or via Boden's Web site. A prize of £500 credit was offered for the best submission.

Creative and Outbound Piece

As well as the cover and inside flap, the back cover included the recipient's address as the catalogs were mailed in a transparent wrapper. Valuable space on the back cover was also personalized with relevant products. The e-mail campaign design echoed the catalog and also featured automatically selected products. The back cover of the catalog included three products most likely to appeal to the customer based on a statistical analysis of their transaction and Web browser history.

Reasons for Success

Best practices learned from this solution are:

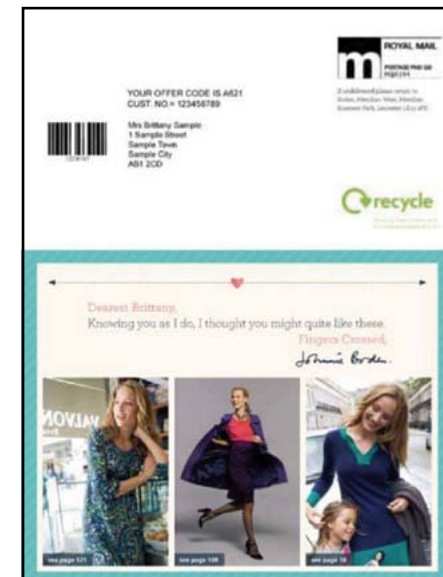
- **Gain impact with engaging copy.** The startling front cover with the recipient's initial and name in bold in the context of an intriguing story immediately gains the reader's attention. The unfolding of the story draws the reader in, arouses curiosity, and invites interaction.
- **Relevant content increases response.** A simple segmentation of the customer database enables content to be customized for different groups. The customization does not need to be complex, but precise targeting of product offerings to the individual based on their preferences or previous transaction history can significantly boost responses and conversions.
- **Include an appealing offer.** Ensure there is a benefit for every recipient if they respond such as a voucher or a discount. A competition can provide an extra incentive if there is an attractive reward for the winner.



Personalized catalog cover.



The Johnnie loves motif proclaims Johnnie's affections for the customer on the cover and spine of the piece.



Personalized back cover.

In May 2011 Project Love Story won the prestigious UK Marketing Week Engage Award in the CRM/Loyalty category. The judges said it was “a great example of marketing with a personal touch. Strong customization made it highly engaging and drove strong results.” Also, in the 2011 PrintWeek UK awards, Howard Hunt Group won the Cross-media Company of the Year award for the Boden personalized catalog. **TSR**

About PODi

PODi the Digital Printing Initiative, is an international organization that helps its members build profitable digital printing and marketing solutions businesses. PODi has the world’s largest database of more than 450 digital printing case studies, along with practical, proven solutions sales tools, research, and educational events. Find out more about membership at www.podi.org.

Get free case studies at www.caslon.net/Free-Case-Studies.htm.

Client	Boden www.boden.co.uk Founded in 1991, Boden is a mail order clothing retailer based in London and has operations in the UK, USA, Germany and Austria and employs more than 800 people. On average, Boden ships 12,500 parcels per day from its UK warehouse.
Print Provider & Agency	Howard Hunt Group www.howardhuntgroup.com Howard Hunt Group is a leading marketing services provider near London with expertise in data, digital marketing, print and direct mail, post and fulfillment. The group is made up of five independent companies in the same location, each specializing in their respective disciplines. The companies include Howard Hunt, which does direct mail, door drops and inserts, and Celerity which provides data analysis, customer insight and digital marketing services.
Hardware	Xeikon 8000
Software	GMC PrintNet-T, Kodak Prinergy
Target Audience	Mail order clothing buyers from an existing CRM database. Mainly female, 34-55 years old with a professional, managerial, or administrative occupation (ABC1)
Distribution	250,000
Date	Fall 2010

Copyright of Seybold Report: Analyzing Publishing Technologies is the property of Joss Group and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.